

27 May 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director/Intelligence

SUBJECT: Speculation on the Advisability of Revising the
US-Japanese Security Treaty

1. For some time SRS has been speculating on the potential strength of Communism and left wing socialism in Japan. Although the JCP and its electoral following are small, the influence of Communism on the Japanese labor movement, the Sohyo, and the left wing of the Socialist Party is considerable. While the government appears to be following a promising course of legal repression coupled with reforming measures, the prospect of containing the movement within democratic limits is not unclouded. Both the Liberal-Democratic government parties and the left and right wing socialist combination harbor serious germs of instability, and new political alignments might emerge in the event of an economic setback or adverse international political developments.

2. The Kishi government, as MacArthur's cables clearly show, is vitally concerned with establishing stable leadership, both within Japan and throughout Southeast Asia and even beyond. On the other hand, it confronts a strategic policy dilemma in its position toward Communist China: whether to continue under American prompting to oppose the growing giant or to make a basic economic and political accommodation. Central to this problem is, of course, the attitude toward nuclear weapons. It is apparent that responsible Japanese sentiment is ambivalent on this subject; it continues to deplore the age of atomic warfare, while recognizing that it may no longer be possible to avoid participation in it.

3. Under the circumstances, the revision of the security treaty with the United States becomes crucial. In a cable of 14 May 1957, the Department of State informed the Tokyo Embassy that the "psychological climate" in the US is not ripe for any revision of the treaty. This may be the case, though one is inclined to speculate whether it is not the psychological climate of the Pentagon which is referred to. This issue, plus the "finger in the dike" position of the US on revising Chicom controls -- now almost certain to be unsuccessful -- point to a rapid deterioration of US ability to influence the future of Japanese politics.

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4. If, as seems probable, the best interests of the US would be served by a continuation of the Liberal-Democratic coalition in power, it would seem that we should make every effort to bring about a "psychological climate" in the US which would enable us to make a substantial concession to Premier Kishi on his visit to Washington. It is possible that a conciliatory attitude on our part would enable the Kishi government to take steps in our interest, such as revising the constitution to permit an accelerated defense build up or discouraging anti-American attitudes with respect to base rights in Japan and Okinawa. If he is unable to bring back something to his people, there is every reason to believe that he will be effectively attacked by the opposition, and that his government may not be able to survive. In such event, the extent of Communist influence in Japan might show a spectacular upsurge.

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Chief, SRS/DDI